– GREGORY VALENCIA, S.J. –

DISPUTATION ON PREDESTINATION

A.I. TRANSLATION
SONNET 3.7.

ON PREDESTINATION AND REPROBATION

A Disputation Publicly Held At The Academy
Of Dillingen On November 16, 1574

BY THE
REV. FR. GREGORY OF VALENCIA

A.I. TRANSLATION
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Disputation with The Rev. Fr. Gregory Of Valencia, S.J.,
Professor of Sacred Theology, Presiding,
and the Reverend and Most Learned Michael
Dornvogelius, Master Of Liberal Arts And Philosophy,
Responding.

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DEDICATION

TO THE MOST RELIGIOUS AND ILLUSTRIOUS PRINCE JOHN EGOLPH, Bishop of Augsburg, his most generous patron, Michael Dornvogel sends greetings.

Sacred Theology, MOST ILLUSTRIOUS JOHN, which is the discipline most proper to a Christian person, and which most truly discusses the eternal Divine Nature, ought deservedly to be considered as surpassing all other disciplines of the arts by a wide margin. Indeed, to compare it with Metaphysics (setting aside other disciplines about which our judgment admits no doubt whatsoever), which the ancients called both First Philosophy and simply Wisdom, and also Theology—what excellence is there in Metaphysics that is not far surpassed by our discipline, that is, true Metaphysics and true Theology? Metaphysics indeed dared to penetrate into the heavens, and discussed certain matters concerning minds separate from all corporeal creation (which we call intelligences) and concerning God himself, the First Principle, but these discussions were so few, so ambiguous, so insubstantial and imperfect that they might be judged mere sketches (skiagraphias), that is, shadowy pictures or initial outlines, whereas the matters explained by our theologians are considered images of the most noble and profound realities, depicted and illuminated with vivid colors. The power of our Theology is such that it infuses the minds of those who have devoted themselves to it with a certain divine light, dispels all clouds of ignorance, reveals man to his Creator and the Creator to his creature much more clearly than ancient Philosophy could, and finally teaches and explains with the most certain conclusions everything necessary for eternal salvation, for which purpose we were born. For our Theology relies not on human reasoning but on divine oracles, not on the voices and testimonies of Aristotle and Plato (whose authority is considered preeminent among the learned), but on those of the holy Prophets, Apostles, and of Jesus Christ himself, whom the eternal Father sent down to us from heaven as the Teacher of righteousness and truth. Given these things, we rightly venerate Theology as the science of sciences, the teacher, queen, and empress of all doctrines, and I will consider truly rich and wealthy whoever obtains its treasures. For if even profane literature has always been accorded such glory by wise men that they both despised all treasures in comparison with its riches and believed that others should despise them too, what judgment should we finally make concerning the study of sacred literature? The more it exceeds the excellence of all other disciplines, the more blessed it makes its devotees. Indeed, MOST ILLUSTRIOUS JOHN, having been introduced into the sacred temples of this celestial discipline, and having spent several years now engaged in understanding and contemplating it, and seeming to have

reaped for myself a fruit of my labors that, while not the greatest, is certainly not the least, I have decided to offer you some specimen of this discipline in these assertions, and by this kind of duty or debt to declare my devotion to your Excellency. Although this is insignificant compared to your highest merits toward me, nevertheless distinguished men have customarily valued intention of mind far more than the magnitude of gifts and services. Therefore, since I am conscious of my piety and reverence toward you, I do not seem to be sending nothing to you, even though what I send is small and hardly worthy of your splendor. Thus, at the urging and encouragement of my teachers, I have selected from those theological disputations several propositions on predestination and reprobation to be publicly defended in your Academy, which I have dedicated to you. I earnestly ask that you continue to show me your liberality, already long known to all. Farewell, Most Illustrious Prince. Given at Dillingen, on the Calends of November [November 1], in the year 1574.

ON PREDESTINATION AND REPROBATION

1. PREDESTINATION (setting aside the various meanings of the term) is nothing other than an operation of the divine intellect by which rational creatures are directed toward the attainment of eternal beatitude through supernatural means with certainty. With this operation, in which the proper nature of predestination consists, another operation of the divine will is conjoined, by which God wills to bring about what is preordained by the intellect, which at the appointed time is executed through both operations.

2. If you consider the nature of predestination in this way, it is nothing in the predestined person, but rather in God himself—indeed, it is God himself, from whom, because of his infinite perfection, none of his operations is really distinct. If, however, you consider its effects, there are three in the predestined person, to which all others can be reduced, as St. Paul clearly taught: namely, calling, justification, and glorification. "For those whom he predestined, he also called, and those whom he called, he also justified, and those whom he justified, he also glorified."

3. But since "many are called, but few are chosen," it should be understood that not every divine calling is an effect of predestination, but only that efficacious calling which the called person not only hears with the intellect, but to which he also responds, with God's good assistance, through the consent of the will in such a way that he either preserves the grace received until the final breath of life, or certainly does not depart from life without recovering it through repentance.

4. But if a person does not respond to the calling, or responds only for a time, so that at death he is found destitute of justifying grace, such calling and justification are certainly effects of the common divine providence of supernatural means, not of predestination. Therefore, calling and justification are not effects of predestination in such a way that they necessarily proceed from it alone. Indeed, only these two of its effects have such a mutual connection with predestination: final perseverance (as it is called), which is referred to justification, and the attainment of glory.

5. Nor should the fact that the attainment of beatitude is the ultimate end of man move us, as it does certain others, to refrain from calling it an effect of predestination, although we willingly grant them that predestination, which is a part of divine providence, is concerned only with means. For formal beatitude itself, which is man's ultimate end, if referred to God himself and to his providence, is undoubtedly a means which, like all other created things, God refers to himself and to his own goodness as the absolutely ultimate end of all things.

6. Therefore, from the fact that the attainment of glory is man's ultimate end, it undoubtedly follows that it cannot fall under man's prudence or providence, which extends only to the means of man; but it does not follow that it escapes the ordering of divine providence, whose end is not a finite one.

7. But we also consider false and inconsistent with reason what others, thinking quite the opposite, say: that only the attainment of glory is an effect of predestination. For (they say) if God were to decree, as perhaps he could, to confer beatitude on someone who was not endowed with grace and other means, that person would nonetheless be said to be predestined—let it be so called, to avoid a dispute over terminology—but certainly he would not be predestined by that predestination by which, in the present order of things, we acknowledge that people are predestined.

8. Therefore, even if we concede to them that such predestination as they imagine, if it could exist, would be the cause of glorification alone, there is nothing that compels us to deny that predestination of a very different kind, by which people are now predestined, and about which we are speaking, has other effects besides the attainment of glory, which we have already enumerated.

9. Furthermore, from what has been briefly stated about the nature of predestination itself and its effects, and what will be explained more fully below, a clearer path is opened for resolving that very difficult question about the cause of predestination, namely, whether it is to be established in us. For it would be superfluous to seek a cause of predestination in itself, which is clearly an operation of God himself, which, like God himself, is entirely without cause. But theologians raise the question only about whether there is in us a cause of those effects of predestination which we have mentioned, and consequently of predestination itself as it is related to these effects.

10. For since those effects, if they are actually found in a person, must fall under the ordering of divine providence (which nothing escapes) and thus under predestination, whatever would be their cause on our part would rightly be called the cause of divine predestination insofar as it regards those effects—that is, it would be the cause for divine ordination to be directed toward such effects. Thus, all theologians have reasonably posited this: we have the same relationship to predestination itself, as it is related to some or all of its effects, as we have to those effects themselves, because of the mutual connection that exists between an operation as it relates to some object, and the object itself.

11. There is therefore a great controversy whether anything in us precedes the effects of predestination which, having been foreseen from eternity by God, was a meritorious cause on account of which God determined to confer those effects on us, which is to predestine us, so that predestination followed certainly and infallibly from such a foreseen cause—either with the certainty of the law of divine justice, if that cause is

asserted to be meritorious from justice, or with the certainty of mercy, if it is said to be meritorious only from a certain congruity; for the question about the cause is far-reaching.

12. In this controversy, Pelagius would have to be challenged, who attributes the effects of predestination to I know not what merits of nature, if this did not rather pertain to the topic of justification and grace. But how far Origen's opinion, which attributes predestination to the works of the soul created before the body, is from the truth, is clearly shown by the words of St. Paul: "For when they were not yet born, nor had done anything good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not from works, but from him who calls, it was said that the elder shall serve the younger, etc."

13. Among other teachers who are considered worthy of the Christian name, this is especially certain: that there is a cause in us for predestination with respect to some particular effects. For just as one effect of predestination is the cause of another, so it is also the cause of predestination itself as it relates to that effect. Thus, merits foreseen by God are the cause of predestination with respect to the ultimate effect, which is glory.

14. For just as God confers glory on no adult except because of merits, so also from eternity he did not decree that he would give it except because of those same merits. For all things were decreed by God from eternity in precisely the same way as they come to pass afterward. And not only did God from eternity will first that man should have merits as the cause of glory, rather than glory itself, but he also from eternity first saw that man would have merits (which some without cause are afraid to concede) on account of which, having been foreseen, he willed to confer glory on him.

15. For what God wills to exist first, he first ordains as going to be, since he is the cause of things outside himself through both powers, namely intellect and will. Thus, if he wills the predestined person to have merits before glory, because merits are the cause of glory, he also first ordains by his intellect that the person will have merits, and consequently merits are seen first. For by the very fact that God ordains something, he sees it by his intellect.

16. Yet the fact that the merits of the predestined were seen and willed by God before he had predestined them with respect to that particular effect of glory does not prevent God from having seen and willed the glory of the predestined person, as the final cause of merits, before his merits. For just as the effects of divine intellection and volition are prior and posterior to one another in different kinds of causality, so also the same effects are presented to divine intellection and volition as prior and posterior in different ways. For (to speak in our manner) the same order of prior and posterior must

be established in divine actions themselves, as they are related to the objects, as is found in the objects themselves.

17. And not only is there a cause in us for predestination with respect to the ultimate effect, as has been said, but also our supernatural actions, which we perform with God's help and which ultimately dispose us for grace, should be called the cause of predestination with respect to this particular effect, namely formally justifying grace, just as they are the disposing and material cause of grace itself, although not the meritorious cause, at least not from justice; for grace, since it is the principle of merit, does not fall under merit, and thus neither does predestination as it is compared to grace.

18. Therefore, what the better thinking theologians say with Augustine, that there is no cause of predestination except the divine will alone, should be understood in this way: that we understand nothing on our part to precede all the effects of predestination with which they have a certain connection, and therefore that the cause of the whole of predestination is not to be sought in us. We consider this opinion to be so certain that the opposite seems to us hardly consonant with the teaching of St. Paul.[1]

19. From this explanation of Augustine's opinion, it is permissible to conjecture that there was only a dispute over terminology between him and the other holy Fathers, especially among the Greeks. For the latter, using the term predestination to signify only the preordination of the ultimate effect, asserted that foreseen merits were the cause of predestination, which is true, as we have seen, and was often conceded by Augustine himself. But he, using the term predestination very broadly to encompass all the effects we have mentioned, rightly denied that anything in us could be the cause of predestination.

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[1] See the many books he wrote on this subject against the Pelagians, particularly Book 1 to Simplicianus, question 2; [his commentaries] on Romans 9 & 11; on Ephesians 1; 2 Timothy 1. Also see Origen on Romans chapter 9; Chrysostom's homilies 52 on Genesis & 18, and homily 12 on the Epistle to the Hebrews; John Damascene, Book 2 of Orthodox Faith, final chapter, and Book 4, chapter 20. The same view seems to be held by Ambrose on Romans 9, and Cyril on that passage of Malachi 1: "Jacob I have loved." And others [hold this view] as well. [Also consult] Book 1 on the Predestination of the Saints in several places, and the book On the Gift of Perseverance, chapter 14, and Book 1 on the Predestination of God at the end. [Also] Book 1 on the Grace of Christ, chapter 44, and the book On Nature and Grace, chapter 61.
This is a listing of patristic and Augustinian sources that the author is referencing to support his arguments about predestination. It includes works by Augustine (the references to Simplicianus, On Predestination of the Saints, On the Gift of Perseverance, On the Grace of Christ, and On Nature and Grace), as well as commentaries by Church Fathers like Origen, John Chrysostom, John Damascene, Ambrose, and Cyril of Alexandria.

20. Yet even taking predestination in this way, Augustine himself strove to persuade many that it should by no means be thought that the aforementioned Fathers conceded a cause of predestination in us—namely those who, as he himself testifies, knew very well the rule of faith, which holds that no one is liberated from the damned mass of sin except one whom the grace of the merciful God has raised up, with no merits preceding his own justification in him.

21. Therefore, they did not want to assign in us a cause of the first effects of predestination, which manifestly conflicts with the truth. For nothing can be found in us to which God's efficacious calling and prevenient grace, to which man responds with supernatural actions of faith, charity, etc., with the help of God who calls, would certainly follow. For no one even moderately versed in Scripture is unaware that this very calling and those operations are gifts of God, which we in no way merit beforehand. "For who has first given to him, and it shall be paid back to him?" And as was said above, all these things pertain to the first effect of predestination.

22. Indeed, this very thing seems to have been defined by the Fathers in the Council of Trent when they declare that the beginning of justification itself in adults must be taken from God's prevenient grace through Jesus Christ, so that without damage to the faith no one may establish in us the beginning of prevenient and calling grace itself. For it would be nothing other than to deny what the Fathers define, that prevenient grace itself is the beginning of justification.

23. St. Paul excellently indicates this very thing to us, calling the justified person a new creature. For just as a creature is made by the operation of God the creator alone, with nothing pre-existing, so justification itself does not have its beginning from the part of man, but proceeds from calling and prevenient grace as from its first origin. Almost alluding to this elsewhere, the same Apostle, having taught that we obtain grace not from works, lest anyone should boast, immediately added, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works."

24. But if, as has been established before, it is precisely the same thing to assign in us a cause and beginning of predestination with respect to the first and all other effects, and of the effects themselves, undoubtedly the opinion of those is not without danger who make the good use of free will, by which man consents to God's calling grace and thus gives it a place to be efficacious in him, the meritorious cause of predestination from a certain congruity, as the first effect of predestination; for they are forced to posit in us some beginning of justification.

25. And they seem to err not a little in this, that they conceive that very consent of the will, or good use, to proceed from free will in such a way as if it were not also the effect of calling and prevenient grace itself (which will be better perceived when we explain below what this calling grace consists in). Therefore, it is impossible for that

consent to precede all the effects of predestination as a cause, just as it is impossible for it to precede itself, since being an effect of grace and a supernatural means for attaining beatitude, it must undoubtedly be numbered among the effects of predestination.

26. That this imagination of theirs is very far from the truth, anyone can see who carefully reads the express canon of the Council of Orange. "If anyone contends," the words of the council are, "that God waits for our will to be cleansed from sins, and does not confess that even our willing to be cleansed is brought about in us by the infusion and operation of the Holy Spirit, he resists the Holy Spirit saying through Solomon, 'The will itself is prepared by the Lord,' and the Apostle's salutary preaching, 'God is the one who works in us both to will and to accomplish.'"

27. That consent and good use are indeed in our power, not because we perform them by free will alone, as these people seem falsely to have thought, but because that prevenient grace of God, which also effects this consent in us (as will be explained more fully below), is at hand for us to consent, unless we wish to resist that same grace. Hence, that good use is nothing other than the very act of repentance and charity, etc., insofar as it proceeds from free will, yet not without the help of prevenient grace. Therefore, it is also an effect of predestination.

28. Indeed, this good use, which justification and other effects of predestination must certainly follow (for those who assert good use as the cause of predestination are not speaking of any other good use), must be some act, but there is no act that justification and other effects of predestination certainly follow except the acts of repentance, charity, and other such supernatural acts, with final perseverance simultaneously present. For after any other morally good act, man can resist grace, since any other act precedes justification in time, during which time he can indeed render himself unfit to receive grace. Therefore, justification certainly follows no other act besides those mentioned. Let it therefore be established that the good use of free will, which justification certainly follows, cannot be the cause of all the effects of predestination, namely because it is one of them.

29. Furthermore, what others say, that God predestines certain people because he foreknows that they will make good use of the grace received, is supported by no reason at all, since certain effects of predestination precede that good use of grace as the cause of that same good use, of which, therefore, that good use itself cannot rightly be assigned as the cause, and thus neither of the whole of predestination.

30. Although, as has been said, nothing on our part precedes the entire predestination as its cause, there is nevertheless something within our power, with God's help, which in divine foreknowledge is connected with the whole of predestination, namely our cooperation, by which we who finally persevere cooperate with prevenient and calling divine grace. By reason of this cooperation, since the entire

predestination is connected with it by the infallible law of God's mercy, predestination itself, regarding all its effects, is also within our power through God's grace. Unless this is conceded, it would be most difficult to explain how the attainment of salvation is within our power, since no one but the predestined attains it.

31. Certainly if, as all admit, we ourselves have precisely the same relation to predestination as a whole as we do to all the effects of predestination, they must also admit that just as all the effects of predestination are connected with our cooperation, so too in divine foreknowledge and volition (which tend toward things as they are interconnected) our cooperation is connected with the whole of predestination. Indeed, if we consider the first effect of predestination, namely efficacious calling (which is joined with our consent, by which we respond with our will to the persuasion of the intellect), and all the rest together, it will be clear to us that God produces nothing in us pertaining to salvation through predestination without our participation.

32. Therefore, although it should not be said that God predestines people because they cooperate with divine grace (for that would be to fall into the opinion we have already attacked), nonetheless, that those and no others are predestined whom God sees from eternity will cooperate with His grace, whether aided by common or special assistance, seems to be clearly indicated by St. Paul with these words: "Whom He foreknew, He also predestined." And elsewhere more clearly: "If anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel unto honor."

33. No less clearly does St. Augustine testify to this same connection of our cooperation with the whole of predestination when, discussing the manner God employs in predestining people, he ascribes all the effects of predestination only to those who (to use his words) "have received the gift of vocation with due devotion," who "are not subjected to carnal allurements," and to other vices and sins extensively enumerated there by Augustine.

34. From this, however, it by no means follows that this cooperation of ours is the cause or beginning of predestination itself, just as from this Catholic assertion, namely that he who cooperates with divine grace is justified, and no other, it does not follow—contrary to the doctrine of faith—that the beginning of justification is found in us. Therefore, just as all truly Catholic theologians admit that the process of our justification does not have its beginning or cause in us, and yet is connected with our cooperation, so they must concede that although the cause or beginning of our predestination is not in us, nevertheless it is connected with our cooperation in divine foreknowledge, and these no more contradict each other than do those previous statements. Indeed, this seems to be necessarily accepted by all, since (as has often been said) the judgment concerning predestination itself is the same as that concerning its effects, as far as the present discussion is concerned.

35. This will seem less difficult to one who considers that our cooperation is so connected with the whole of predestination that it is nevertheless a certain effect of it; thus it cannot be a prerequisite condition for predestination. For this cooperation itself proceeds from calling and prevenient grace, as was discussed earlier. But we say it is connected with predestination as a whole insofar as by God's infallible ordinance it is established that whoever is seen from eternity to employ this particular final cooperation will have the remaining effects of predestination, and thus is predestined, and not another, because no other does so. For in the one who cooperates by responding to prevenient grace, there is already efficacious calling, thus the first effect of predestination, and he has all the rest if he finally perseveres with God's help.

36. The fact that this cooperation is an effect of efficacious calling, and thus of predestination, does not at all prevent efficacious calling and the whole of predestination from being within our power, in a way sufficient for us to be able to attain salvation. For it is enough that the concurrence of the superior cause, which is required for operation, is in our power insofar as by God's infallible ordinance it is so connected with our concurrence (as cause with effect) that it is true to say: if the concurrence of the inferior cause exists, then that of the superior also exists, and vice versa.

37. For by this reasoning it is sufficient that God's concurrence, required for performing any natural act, is in our power, although that divine concurrence is undoubtedly its cause. And with a similar infallible connection, God's efficacious calling and our cooperation are linked, as was said before. Therefore, by reason of cooperation, God's efficacious calling, and consequently predestination, is in our power.

38. Thus, to defend with Augustine that there is no cause of predestination in us, it is sufficient to say that what is in our power was not seen by God from eternity before He predestined us. But it does not seem true, nor is it necessary to concede for this defense, that God, while predestining us, did not simultaneously see this (by reason of that mutual connection of all effects with our cooperation, as we have said).

39. When Paul says, "Before Jacob had done anything good or evil, he was loved," by these first words he only wanted to explain that Jacob was chosen from eternity, before he was born in time or had done anything. Nor from these words is an argument drawn to prove that Jacob was not loved, and thus not predestined, before his works were foreseen—this must be conceded—but from what follows: "not by works, but by Him who calls," etc.

40. Indeed, if the sense of those words is "Before he was foreseen to act, he was predestined," so that those first words are to be understood of foreknowledge, then similarly it would be proven that he was predestined before he was foreseen to be born according to his natural being, for it also says "before they were born." But this is

rightly denied by all. For just as natural being precedes the effects of supernatural predestination, so too it is seen by God first.

41. But the principle established by many most learned theologians would also be against the faith, namely, that God saw all men's sins before He predestined Christ the Lord or anyone else. For Paul similarly says there: "before anything evil." But that this theological principle is true and firm is rather clearly gathered from Paul's discourse in the same chapter, namely that he asserts election was joined with mercy. Therefore, as with mercy, so too with election, sins are presupposed in divine foreknowledge.

42. Furthermore, this can greatly console those who understand how, as has been explained, predestination is in human power by reason of cooperation: that there is no person so destitute of necessary and sufficient divine aid that he cannot be justified by cooperating with divine grace and, with God's help, persevere in the grace received. Therefore, there is no one in whose power it is not, with divine grace, to be predestined, since this is conjoined with such cooperation by God's infallible ordinance.

43. For although there are or have been many to whom the glorious God has not actually granted the supernatural means necessary for salvation, He is most ready, when they do what they can, supported by natural light (whatever that may be, for it is certain to be something), to bestow liberally, without any merit of nature, all the aids necessary for salvation that they lack, either by Himself or through another, according to His infinite wisdom and power.

44. This mode of the divine will's preparation for conferring actual aids is undoubtedly sufficient to make the aforementioned cooperation and attainment of salvation possible for human beings, as far as depends on God. For they can do something, upon the doing of which actual aids will be at their disposal; and having these, they can cooperate, and by cooperating they can attain salvation.

45. From this it is clear that it does not in any way contradict the gentle disposition of God's supernatural providence if, as with many, so not with all, He confers necessary aids in reality at all times. For all that is required of it is that God does not fail man, who cannot attain salvation by his own powers, such that this becomes possible for him with divine aid. It has been declared that God accomplishes this by that preparation of His will alone.

46. However, do not infer from this that what people can do naturally, whatever it may be, to which sufficient aids certainly follow, can be called the meritorious cause of predestination by congruity. For although aids, which are effects of the common providence of supernatural things, certainly follow, the effects of predestination do not certainly follow from this. For even having these aids, a person can resist according to his will, so that in him there is neither efficacious calling nor other effects. But the cause

of predestination, as was said at the beginning, would have to have a certain connection with all the effects of predestination.

47. Moreover, from what we have said, that adults are sufficiently provided with knowledge of faith and other things necessary for salvation by the aforementioned preparation of the divine will, it follows that children of unbelievers, in whom knowledge of the Gospel is not present, are also sufficiently provided for, since for them there is one sufficient way of help through their parents. That it is actually better for those to whom such aids are actually given than for those to whom they are only given in the manner described, no one can doubt, but now we are discussing that these also have been sufficiently provided for.

48. Indeed, even those who die in the mother's womb or through the negligence of parents without baptism are provided for, precisely by the fact that God has prepared natural causes by natural providence, through which they could be brought into the light and, once born, could be baptized through the care of parents (which they could have applied) according to the order of supernatural providence. For this is sufficient that salvation is absolutely possible for them on God's part. To change or impede the course of natural causes, which often prevent this from happening, does not always pertain to supernatural providence, whose role is to perfect, not to change the order of nature. But if it sometimes does this, as with one who is "taken away lest wickedness change his understanding," this pertains to a most special aid, not necessary for the possibility of attaining salvation.

49. And by the same reasoning it is evident that those who, bound by mortal sin, fall into madness and thus cannot recover their senses, are sufficiently provided for so that it is possible for them to attain salvation, because God, as far as depends on Him, has so tempered human nature by His natural providence and prepared necessary causes that a person could preserve free use of reason, and thus, having fallen into sin, could recover by supernatural means, which are at hand. That He did not impede the natural causes of madness in no way prevents sufficient provision being made for such a person, unless you want to say that all who die in mortal sin also lack sufficient aids because God did not prevent the natural causes of death. For it is more impossible for them than for the insane to attain salvation.

50. It will be easier to explain what these aids consist of (which is very useful for understanding what we have said about them and everything else) if we consider what God proposes to Himself in conferring them, namely, to move the human will to perform works of virtue. Thus, since the most natural way of arousing the will is to persuade the intellect, whose role it is to move the will by its command, to these aids belong first various arguments by which God tries to accomplish this.

51. Of this kind is interior or exterior illumination, when God, by Himself or through another person, teaches certain truths, by the knowledge of which one is impelled to act well. Such is the illumination of faith. Here also belong certain works of divine providence, by which various affections are aroused in a person, either of love or fear, which contribute greatly to moving the intellect and rightly ordering life. Of this sort are God's benefits, miracles, extraordinary events, permission of temptation, and other things of this kind.

52. Besides these things which pertain to the intellect, to these aids belongs an actual motion of the will, by which God helps a person who does not resist, so that by consenting to the aforementioned aids, and thus to calling grace, which consists in these, he may respond with his will. When this motion is present (and it is present whenever a person does not resist), then there is efficacious calling, which we have often said is the first effect of predestination in one who finally perseveres.

53. That this actual motion of the will, beyond the illumination of the intellect, is necessary (which some seem to deny without sufficient consideration) is excellently confirmed by St. Augustine from the fact that David, after he had asked for that illumination, saying: "Give me understanding, and I will search your law, and I will keep it with my whole heart," further adds, asking for such a motion: "Incline my heart to your testimonies."[2]

54. Therefore, we assert that God has decreed to deny these aids, thus explained, to no one. This seems to be indicated in many not obscure passages of Scripture. But if the same Scripture indicates that divine grace is present unequally to all, or even that it is sometimes denied to some, we believe that such inequality consists either in the manner of conferring these same sufficient necessary aids, or even in the different motives that are applied by God to arouse a person. For there is a great latitude in the motives themselves, as can be seen from what has been said, and in the manner of conferring them.

55. Furthermore, we confess that grace is denied to those who in Scripture are said to be hardened, not indeed the necessary and common grace, but a certain special and abundant grace, by which God, according to His wisdom and supreme power, draws a person to Himself in such a way that, once drawn, he runs after Him most certainly, yet spontaneously. Therefore, God is said to harden a person because He denies him this most special grace, which, if present, would easily soften his heart, as St. Augustine discusses. Thus the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, who nevertheless was not destitute of sufficient grace by which he could be converted, as seems to be gathered from

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[2] On predestination and grace Ch. 11 and 1 Psalm 118. Psalm 144. Ezekiel 18. Luke 11. Romans 2. 2 Peter 3. James 1. And the same seems to be gathered from all places where God imposes precepts on all, exhorts all to repentance. Exodus 9. To the Romans, 11.

Scripture, and Augustine himself tries to show with excellent arguments (whatever others may gather from other passages of Augustine).

56. From what has been said, it altogether follows that although on the part of the will of those who are predestined, no cause can be assigned why they are predestined, yet in the wills of those who are not predestined by God there is a cause why they are not predestined, namely because they do not cooperate with divine grace, which is available to all. With this cooperation, their predestination would have been connected, as has been explained before.

57. Just as, although on the part of the will of those who are justified (for, as was established at the beginning, we must speak in the same way about predestination and its effects), the beginning of justification cannot be assigned, yet in those who are not justified, we place the cause why they are not justified, and thus why they do not actually have other effects of predestination, namely because they do not respond by cooperating with divine grace. So it is most truly said that our perdition is from ourselves, our help is in God alone; and that from Augustine: "Let him who is delivered love grace; let him who is not delivered acknowledge the debt."

58. Indeed, if without any regard to the free cooperation of humans with grace or their resistance, the glorious God, moved solely by Himself, did not predestine certain people, we would be forced to admit that God deliberately makes salvation impossible for such non-predestined persons, namely by not deeming them worthy, without any cause in themselves, of predestination which is absolutely necessary for attaining salvation. But this is not only alien to divine goodness, but also seems greatly to contradict the merits of Christ the Lord, who, as He died for all, also merited for all that, as far as depends on God, salvation should be impossible for no one.

59. Nor indeed is St. Paul, when he seems to refer the cause why someone is not predestined, just as why someone is predestined, to the divine will alone, to be understood as if he meant that there is absolutely no cause in the person why he is not predestined; but making a comparison of two people, neither of whom cooperates with common aids, when He has mercy on one, conferring on him certain most special aids with which he finally cooperates, and predestines him, Paul teaches that there is no cause why He does not similarly have mercy on the other, whom He hardens by denying him that special grace by which he would be softened. Although, speaking absolutely, the sufficient cause why He does not predestine him was that he had not cooperated with common aids.

60. For there is a great difference between saying that the non-cooperation of the non-predestined is the cause why he is absolutely not predestined, and saying it is the cause why he rather than another is not predestined. For the first, it is enough that this cause is of itself sufficient for him not to be predestined, although the same cause

exists in others who are nevertheless predestined by a singular mercy. For the second to be correctly stated, it would be necessary that such a cause should not be common to any non-predestined person with any predestined person, which does not happen, as we have said, in the case at hand.

61 Just as (if an example is permitted) one who has most gravely offended royal majesty has sufficiently merited that the King should punish him with a death sentence, yet why he, rather than another who was equally injurious to the King but was liberally granted life, should be punished with death, he did not merit by that crime; rather, all of this was placed in the King's will.

62 And indeed anyone who carefully reads through that entire chapter will easily understand that the words of St. Paul are to be understood in this sense; namely, that he who refers the cause why God hardens one and has mercy on another to the divine will alone, clearly shows that there is a sufficient cause for being hardened—namely, one's sins, which are presupposed to hardening, just as they are also presupposed to mercy. But why one person is hardened rather than another on whom God has mercy, in whom sins are also foreseen, there is no cause besides the divine will.

63 Therefore, it is rightly concluded in the ordinary gloss from that discourse of Paul: "It is clear that no one is liberated except by gratuitous mercy, no one is condemned except by most just judgment; but why He liberates this one rather than that one, let him who can scrutinize such a profound judgment, but let him beware of the precipice." And in exactly the same way, St. Augustine and St. Thomas are to be understood, where they assign the divine will as the cause why someone is not predestined, as that mode of speaking clearly shows in St. Augustine, also familiar to St. Thomas: "Why He draws this one and not that one, do not wish to judge if you do not wish to err."

64 But it is very important to have declared both the cooperation of the predestined —that is, joined with predestination in divine foreknowledge, although not as a cause— and that the cause why someone is not predestined is that he does not wish to cooperate with divine grace, for understanding how, although the predestined will most certainly attain salvation and the non-predestined will most certainly be excluded from glory, nevertheless the former will be freely saved and the latter will also freely lose the heavenly inheritance.

65 For just as it is free for each person to cooperate or not to cooperate, so also by reason of this cooperation or resistance, it is free for each person to be predestined or not predestined, which is joined with such cooperation or resistance, although in different ways, because cooperation is not the cause of predestination, as has been explained. What is free for someone can impose necessity upon him from supposition, but cannot impose absolute necessity.

66 Indeed, for those who think that predestination or non-predestination (for it is permissible to call negative reprobation thus, about which we are now treating, for we will discuss later that which is truly and properly reprobation) entirely precedes our cooperation or the resistance of free will in divine foreknowledge, it would be difficult to explain how predestination or non-predestination does not impose absolute necessity.

67 For then the supposition of predestination (and the same is to be understood in its own way in the non-predestined) would be necessary for the predestined, if it is not joined with that which is in his power. And so, what would certainly follow from it would be as necessary for him as the supposition itself. For a supposition then only makes something necessary in a qualified sense and does not remove freedom when it was in the power of the one acting; that it did not exist is free to him—examples of this are readily available to anyone.

68 But this conjunction which we posit both greatly supports our freedom and renders inept the argument of those who reason among themselves in this way: "If I am predestined, whatever I do, I will most certainly be saved; therefore, there is no need to be concerned about good works. If I am not among the number of the predestined, I will most certainly be condemned. Therefore, it will be advisable for me to indulge myself and, while I enjoy this light, to receive whatever pleasure I can from creatures, since I will be deprived of it for eternity after this life."

69 Who does not see that such an inference is foolish, who considers (as has been said) that predestination itself, or non-predestination, and therefore its certainty, is joined with what we will have done in life? How much more correctly will each one think to himself: if God predestines from eternity, as has been said before, the one whom He foresees will cooperate with grace, which is available to all, and does not predestine another because He sees that he resists the same grace, I must strive to provide this cooperation with grace by living diligently, so that it may be true that I am predestined from eternity. For it will be true that God foresaw me from eternity as I will prove myself to be in life. And so if I conduct myself well, I am predestined, and moreover I must always abstain from sins, lest if I end this life in sins (as can happen at any hour), I may be seen from eternity as finally not cooperating, and thus I am not predestined.

70 But come now, let us more expressly satisfy that horned argument by responding to each part. "If I am predestined," you say, "there is no need for me to do good works, because in whatever way, I will most certainly be saved." On the contrary, if you are predestined, it is necessary that you do good works, because, as we have already shown at length, no one is predestined unless he is foreseen to finally do good works in this life. And since you are uncertain at what hour you will depart from life, you must always

do good works, lest at the end you are found not cooperating, and thus what you supposed—that you are predestined—would be false.

71 But how much weight does that other inference have, or rather how much blindness and darkness, when you say thus: "If I am not predestined, it will be advisable to enjoy creatures however much I sin, since I am going to be punished eternally anyway." Someone would no less foolishly reason in this way: "If I am to be hanged for adultery or theft which I am going to commit, I want to take pleasure from theft or adultery, since I am going to be hanged anyway." Fool, if you are to be hanged, it is for the theft you will commit that you will be hanged; therefore, do not steal, and you will not be hanged.

72 So also understand, whoever is moved by that argument to want to receive pleasure from adultery or other kinds of sins. If you are not predestined and are destined for eternal punishment, this will be because in this life you will so resist divine grace and contaminate yourself with various kinds of sins, as has been discussed. Therefore, turn away from evil, cooperate with grace, and do good, and you will not be in the number of the non-predestined. It remains, therefore, that the pursuit of good works is in no way hindered by that dilemma, but by that very fact it should rather be aroused and strengthened.

73 We have said before that predestination is certain, but this is not to be understood as if the predestined is always understood to be in God's grace, nor can he ever fall from it, as Wycliffe has falsely claimed. The many examples of the predestined who were at some time bound by many and grave sins clearly prove this. Certainly David was outside grace when he committed the crime of adultery and homicide, as was Peter, who, struck by the voice of a single maidservant, denied the Lord Christ.

74 Moreover, Paul, once a blasphemer and persecutor of the Church, undoubtedly lacked grace at some time. Not to mention Magdalene, who had been a sinner in the city, and many others. But to deny that all these were predestined would be remarkable impudence, just as it would be remarkable ignorance to affirm that such mortal crimes, which conflict with grace, were not mortal. For nothing more absurd can be said than that the seductions of Magdalene, the thefts of the thief, the blasphemies of Paul, the adulteries of David, and other such sins of the predestined were not deadly.

75 What about the fact that since Wycliffe similarly says that the reprobate are always outside God's grace, that absurdity would follow that salvation would never have come to any person in the Church through the means of the Sacraments or penance, since they are all either predestined (and thus, if, as Wycliffe wants, they are always in grace, they never recover it) or reprobate, who, according to Wycliffe's opinion, are never accepted into it.

76 But Adam (whom it is clear was predestined) would not have sinned mortally, and thus the entire Christian religion would collapse. Therefore, Wycliffe is mistaken. For predestination to be certain is nothing other than that the effects of predestination, which we enumerated at the beginning, will be certain in the predestined at established times, which can clearly happen even though the predestined may for a time take on deadly sins and fall from grace.

77 Moreover, there is a certain number of the predestined known by God from eternity, so that He not only foreknew how many, but also who and what kind they are that are to be saved. Nor should anyone be thought to be saved who has not been predestined by God from eternity. For even if this were not confirmed by the consensus of the whole Church, it would certainly be proven by manifest reason.

78 For whatever good happens at any time is subject to divine providence, from which nothing escapes, and which is eternal like God. Therefore, whoever at some time obtains final salvation through supernatural means has been ordained to obtain it by divine providence from eternity, which is to be predestined. Therefore, let those depart who, besides the predestined and the reprobate, posit some third class of men, from which, however, they imagine that many will be saved who are not predestined.

79 As for how great the number of the predestined is, various people have thought various things. Some say that as many people will be saved as the Angels who fell; others say as many as the Angels who remained, and in addition as many as the Angels who were created. But it is better said (St. Thomas says prudently) that the number of the elect to be located in supernal happiness is known to God alone.

80 But who belongs to the number of the predestined, all mortals are so uncertain that it cannot be known to anyone without a special revelation from God. Bernard rightly says, discussing the heavenly generation of the Elect: "Who will narrate this generation? Who can say, 'I am of the Elect, I am of those predestined to life, I am of the number of the sons,' when Scripture protests: 'Man does not know whether he is worthy of love or hatred, but all things are kept uncertain for the future.'"

81 Therefore, all those contradict the Holy Spirit who, relying on a certain rash confidence, not knowing what the coming day will bring forth, glory in tomorrow, and most vainly boast that they are certainly predestined and will persevere. These, the more certain they seem to themselves to be about obtaining beatitude, the more they are alienated from it, namely, which is always promised to those who are solicitous and fearful about their salvation, not to those who are lightly secure. For blessed is the man who is always fearful.

82 There are most fitting opinions of the Holy Fathers to refute the rashness of these people, so that nothing further is required from us in that kind. From this, however, we may gather how vain is the faith of those who, as they themselves testify,

are impelled to believe that they will certainly remain in that faith, and therefore are predestined. That this is by no means certain has been discovered, even experience teaching how very many have been converted from that faith, or rather perfidy, to another. And no one fails to see that faith which rests on falsehood cannot be firm.[3]

83 However, although, as has been said, no one without revelation can be certain of predestination, it is nevertheless permissible to make a conjecture about predestination from certain signs (which many of the Holy Fathers have done). For, as Bernard eloquently discusses, God has not left His elect without a testimony of consolation in this matter. And of this thing, while there are many arguments, those are especially notable which are sought from those virtues, the zealous practitioners of which Christ the Lord singularly declares blessed.

84 From what has been said about the predestined and the non-predestined, a few things that remain to be said about reprobation will be more easily understood. And to begin with its definition, we say that reprobation is an act of the divine intellect by which God firmly determines to permit the sins of the reprobate, and because of them to exclude them from the kingdom and punish them eternally. To this operation of the divine intellect, in which the proper definition of reprobation is situated, is joined another of the divine will, by which God efficaciously wills that what He ordains by intellect concerning the reprobate be carried out, as we have said in our own way about predestination.

85 Thus, there are two effects of reprobation: the permission of sins and eternal punishment. For the sins of the reprobate to be effects of reprobation is just as contradictory as for God Himself to be the cause of sins, whose action reprobation properly is. And indeed, that their sins are by no means committed by the reprobate with the consent of the divine will, St. Paul shows clearly enough, saying: "But God, willing to show his wrath and to make his power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath fitted for destruction." For what God endures with much patience is undoubtedly alien to His will.

86 But lest anyone be easily deceived in this, it must be kept before our eyes that the sins of the reprobate are by no means ordained to their punishment as means to an end. For if it were so, it would be difficult to explain how the same God, who efficaciously wills the reprobate to be punished, consequently does not will their sins,

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[3] Augustine, On the Gift of Perseverance, chapters 3, 13, and 22; Cyprian, Book 1 of Letters, letter 5; Jerome, on the words 'No one knows, etc.' in Ecclesiastes 9; Hilary, on the words of Psalm 118, 'And do not take the word of truth from my mouth, etc.'; Bernard, Sermon 1 of September; Gregory, Moralia, Book 30, chapter 32, and others. Sermon 1 on the Octave of Easter. Matthew 5.

since the will of the end does not hold without the volition of the means necessary for that end.

87 But the matter is otherwise. For since sins are evils simply, but punishment, on the contrary, is good, it is impossible that they be ordained to it as means per se; rather, they are a necessary presupposition to the punishment itself, which nevertheless happens apart from the intention of God Himself who punishes. But what is in any way a prerequisite for something else need not fall under the will of him who wills what is ultimate, unless you wish to say by the same reasoning that the governor of a city, who efficaciously wills robberies to be punished, must also be a robber by will and consent.

88 But it should not be understood that every permission of sins is an effect of reprobation, but only that which is opposed to the gift of a certain most special grace, which if God were willing to bestow, either the reprobate would not fall into sins, or having fallen, he would most certainly, though of his own accord, rise from them. But that permission which is opposed to God's concurrence, by which God, by impeding the efficacy of natural causes, could prohibit sins, is not an effect of reprobation, but of common and natural providence, by which God has determined generally not to impede inferior causes from operating according to the condition of their nature, whether natural or free. Thus, by the same natural providence, He permits a free man to sin.

89 Since, therefore, God's permission, which is an effect of reprobation, ought to be opposed to supernatural concurrence (namely, which pertains to supernatural providence, such as reprobation is) and is not opposed to sufficient and necessary grace, since this is available to all, even the reprobate, as has been discussed before, it is necessary that this permission consist in this: that God denies to the reprobate that most special grace given to many of the predestined.

90 Hence it follows that hardening and blinding (which consist in the withholding of such grace, by which either the heart of the reprobate would be softened or the intellect illuminated, as has been said before from Augustine) are not to be called effects of reprobation distinct from permission. For that very permission is then called hardening when the reprobate rejects most efficacious means of salvation and resists common and sufficient grace by committing most grave sins.

91 From this it is clearly evident what is called into question when theologians ask whether the cause of the whole of reprobation is placed in the will of the reprobate. For just as we have said about predestination, so also here the doubt is not about reprobation in itself, but about its effects. To that question we respond thus: namely, that those sins with which the reprobate depart from life, whether they are actual or original, are a sufficient cause of the whole of reprobation.

92 Indeed, concerning the ultimate effect of reprobation, namely punishment, no one denies that the sins of the reprobate are the cause of their reprobation. For it clearly follows from what is certain by faith that no one is punished eternally or excluded from the kingdom after this life except on account of sins. Regarding permission, which we have said is another effect of reprobation, anyone who considers certain passages of Scripture will find this also to be true, wherein God's abandonment, hardening, blinding, and other such things (which cannot be understood except as this permission) are attributed to men's sins as their cause. Moreover, nothing is more frequent in Augustine, in almost all the books he wrote on this subject, than to exhort the predestined to acknowledge the grace given to them without any merits, and to urge the reprobate to recognize the justice by which they are most justly abandoned and reprobated by God.[4]

93 Those who do not distinguish the permission of sins, but consider that permission (which we previously said was an effect of common providence) to be an effect of reprobation, find it difficult to believe that sins are the cause of the whole of reprobation, namely because they do not see how sins could be the cause of the permission that was necessary for those very sins to be committed.

94 But it is not difficult to understand how sins could be the cause of permission as opposed to most special grace, which alone, as was said before, pertains to reprobation. For everyone understands that Pharaoh, through his previously committed sins (with God willing to permit this by natural providence), made himself worthy for God to deny him most special grace and to harden him, as Augustine argues.

95 Moreover, just as predestination is certain, so also is reprobation—not because, as Wycliffe imagines, the reprobate is always without grace (for without doubt Lucifer, Saul, and Judas—to say nothing of other reprobates—once excelled in it), but because he must certainly finally lack the most special grace and be condemned on account of sins. Those who assert that God reprobates man without foreknowledge of sins can hardly explain this certainty of reprobation.[5]

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[4] Exodus 9; Wisdom 1; Isaiah 1 & 42; Romans 1; 2 Thessalonians 2; and frequently elsewhere. Book on the Gift of Perseverance, ch. 8; and Book on Predestination and Grace, ch. 5, 9, 13, and 14; and Book on the Predestination of God at the end; and Book 6 of Hypognosticon around the middle; and Enchiridion, ch. 94, 98; and elsewhere.

[5] Ezekiel 28: "You were perfect in your ways," etc., which Augustine understands of Lucifer, in Book 20 on Genesis, ch. 24. And St. Jerome, in that passage concerning Saul in 1 Kings 9: "There was not a better man in Israel than he." Regarding Judas, it is gathered from John 17: "Those whom you gave me I have kept, and none of them is lost except the son of perdition." If he was given to Christ by the Father as an Apostle, then he was at some time in grace.

96 For, setting aside that foreknowledge, there is no act in God whose certainty would require that the reprobate finally has sins. For God, in reprobating a man, has no act of will toward the sins of the reprobate, as was said before. Therefore, it would not be certain that the reprobate would be condemned, even supposing reprobation in God, since no one is condemned unless finally having sins.

97 Nor would they sufficiently address this if they were to say that the reprobate will truly have sins because God decrees to permit the reprobate to fall into them when He reprobates him. For He wills to permit this in such a way that He nevertheless grants him the grace necessary to avoid those sins (for this is common to all, as was said above), but He decrees to deny only the most special grace, which is indeed abundant but by no means necessary for avoiding sins. Therefore, since despite this permission the reprobate has sufficient and necessary grace to flee from sins, it by no means certainly follows from this permission that he will be subject to sins at the end of his life.

98 How the certainty of reprobation does not conflict with the freedom of the reprobate is more easily understood by one who notes what has been said: that reprobation depends on sins as its cause. Therefore, just as it is free for the reprobate to sin, so also is it free for him to be reprobate, which is preceded by those freely committed sins in divine foreknowledge. It has been said above that what is free for someone cannot impose necessity on the same person.

99 But since in many of the predestined, who were endowed with most special grace, God from eternity saw as many or more and greater sins than in many of the reprobate, although the sins of the reprobate were a sufficient cause for them to be reprobated absolutely, they were not a sufficient cause for why they rather than others subject to the same crimes were reprobated; for there is a very great difference between saying this or that, as was explained above when we were dealing with negative reprobation or non-predestination. From this it is clear what St. Paul means, what St. Augustine means, and finally what others among the Fathers understand when they seem not to place the cause of their reprobation in the sins of the reprobate.

100 Finally, what has been said by us concerning predestination and reprobation: from all the men whom God foresaw from eternity as bound by various kinds of sins, He chose some without any merits of their own, either by conferring stronger common aids in a more efficacious way, or even by bestowing certain superabundant ones; but others, because they did not cooperate with common grace, He did not predestine, or even because of others' carelessness or a defect of nature preventing supernatural means from being applied (that we may thus include infants), and all these He most justly reprobated on account of their sins, yet offering sufficient help to all whereby they might attain salvation. St. Augustine seems to have embraced this briefly and

excellently when he says: "Of those for whom just severity had decreed punishment, according to the ineffable disposition of hidden mercy, He chose vessels which He would make for honor; some He absolved from coming wrath by the gift of gratuitous calling, others He left, reserving them for the judgment of equality, yet He took from none the faculty of acknowledging the truth. And thus the fullness of divine foreknowledge was completed, with justice flowing to some, and grace streaming forth to others."

PRAISE BE TO GOD AND THE VIRGIN MOTHER

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD AND PREDESTINATION

BY THE
REV. FR. GREGORY OF VALENCIA

A.I. TRANSLATION
SONNET 3.7

INGOLSTADT, FROM THE TYPOGRAPHICAL
OFFICE OF DAVID SARTORIUS
1584

EXPECTED QUESTION, ON THE KNOWLEDGE AND FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD

Since even to know something briefly about the knowledge of God is beautiful in itself, and since there have not been lacking Sectarians who have abused this theological topic to attack human freedom, it is by no means useless to inquire what should be orthodoxly known about the knowledge of God.

THESIS

1. As God is supremely immaterial and unlimited, so He is endowed with the greatest and most perfect knowledge. Indeed, He does not need either innate or acquired intelligible forms of things for knowing, since His infinite essence represents all things to Him for understanding far more perfectly than any intelligible species could possibly do.

2. And since the substance of GOD cannot, like our soul, be perfected by any habit of knowledge, we must admit that the knowledge which is in GOD is in reality nothing other than God's essence. Thus, since it is infinitely perfect, it does not proceed either according to succession or according to cause and effect, but God understands all things simultaneously. And indeed without the composition of predicate and subject, which means that without the use of propositions He possesses knowledge of what can be stated in propositions.

3. But neither is this knowledge in any way variable, as if it could happen that GOD once was ignorant of what He later knows, or that He is ignorant of what He once knew. This does not happen to God; rather, He has always known and will always know whatever it is that He knows at any time.

4. Furthermore, the knowledge of GOD is not only speculative or only practical; but as it relates to creatures, it should be considered both speculative and practical; but as it relates to GOD Himself, it is only speculative.

5. God knows Himself through Himself as perfectly as He is knowable in Himself, that is, supremely and most perfectly. Thus the Apostle most truly said: "The Spirit of GOD searches even the deep things of GOD." Following the Apostle, theologians say that GOD comprehends Himself.

6. And to this most perfect knowledge by which GOD knows Himself, it also pertains that He knows other things outside Himself, which flow from Him as from the first cause.

7. Yet He does not know them through their own proper species, which they impress upon Him as they do upon us, but through His infinite Essence, which functions (without imperfection) in the capacity of a species. It is only in this sense that what some theologians say should be admitted, that GOD understands other things not in themselves, but in Himself. For it cannot be doubted that creatures are known by God according to the being that they have in reality: and indeed not only according to their common attributes, but also according to their proper predicates, and even according to their individual and singular characteristics.

8. Now, of those things which actually either are, or were, or will be, God is rightly said to have the knowledge of vision; but of those which neither were, nor are, nor will be, but are only possible, He is said to have the knowledge of simple intelligence. Although that possible being of things is not really distinct from the being of those causes which could produce such things.

9. Therefore, GOD knows by the knowledge of vision whatever will be in all eternity, and thus all the thoughts and affections of both humans and Angels, which will be multiplied to infinity in that eternity. And indeed He recognizes them all simultaneously in a single act on His part, although that multitude of thoughts will only be future in succession.

10. And God knows not only good things, but also the evils themselves which can befall good things, namely when He knows that some good ought to be in a thing, which is not in the thing.

11. But when Scripture indicates that GOD does not know or see evils, this must be understood only according to a certain knowledge of approval.

12. But indeed the greatest difficulty at this point is how it can be defended that even things which are by their nature contingent futures, before they happen (as Scripture most certainly teaches) are known to GOD, and that certainly and infallibly. Some theologians place the foundation of this assertion in the fact that all things according to their own proper and real being have coexisted with GOD from eternity in what they call the "instant of eternity." This speculation is strongly disapproved by other theologians of great renown, and it certainly seems to us neither to be from the mind of St. Thomas (as some have thought) nor to be true.

13. Nor does that which is otherwise correctly granted by all have this meaning, namely that all things have been and are always present to GOD in eternity. For this should be understood not by reason of some sempiternal coexistence of those things with GOD, but by reason of the perennial knowledge of GOD, who always has all things in His sight.

14. Therefore, we assert that the certain and infallible knowledge of future contingents in God can be more than sufficiently defended by establishing two

foundations, both of which are firm. One is that all that perfection of knowledge which is in GOD when the contingent thing itself is present (and thus the entire knowledge itself of the contingent thing) was entirely in Him already from eternity when the contingent thing was future. The other is that the fact that a contingent thing coexists, or at some time coexisted, with one who knows it certainly and infallibly, is by no means the reason why the contingent thing is in itself the object of certain and infallible knowledge, but is only a certain condition without which neither humans nor Angels (since they are of limited nature) can know a contingent thing with certainty.

15. From these points it should be understood that GOD knows a contingent thing no less certainly when it is future than when it is present; since at both times He has the same perfection of knowledge in Himself; nor does He need in this regard (just as in many others, since He is of infinite perfection) that condition which He imposed on intelligent creatures for knowing contingent things.

16. Moreover, this certain and infallible knowledge of future contingents is in GOD, not insofar as He knows them as they are in the potency of a contingent or free cause, but as He sees them completely as they will be in themselves according to their real being which they will have when they exist in time.

17. From this, furthermore, it can be understood how this certainty of divine knowledge does not remove the contingency of effects, or our freedom in acting, as the ancient and new Stoics have imagined. For God knows contingent things as they are in themselves, that is, just as they happen. And they have two aspects insofar as they exist and happen. One is that they exist in such a way that they could absolutely have not existed, obviously because of the contingency or freedom of the cause to act, from which they are also called free contingents. The other is that from a hypothesis, that is, after they already exist, they certainly do exist, and cannot simultaneously not exist. From the first it follows that the knowledge which is in GOD of such contingents as they now are, is entirely of them as they are contingent, and thus by no means removes their contingency, but rather regards it as its object. From the second it follows that this same knowledge is certain, since it is about an object which in reality is already certain.

18. But if that object had not existed (as indeed it absolutely could have not existed), it would not follow from this that the knowledge of God which is about it would have been false, but simply that there would have been no knowledge about it at all: This is something that must be supremely noted in this entire matter.

19. Most correctly, therefore, in book 2 of The City of God, chapter 19, St. Augustine says: "It is not because God foreknew what would be in our will that nothing is in our will. For He who foreknew this did not foreknow nothing. Moreover, if He who foreknew what would be in our will did not foreknow nothing but something, then certainly, even with His foreknowledge, there is something in our will. Therefore, we are

by no means compelled either, while retaining the foreknowledge of God, to take away free will, or, while retaining free will, to deny (which would be impious) that God is foreknowing of the future: But we embrace both, we confess both faithfully and truthfully."

QUESTION, ON PREDESTINATION AND REPROBATION.

SINCE THE SECTARIANS TEACH falsely and perniciously in these times about predestination's certainty, as they do about other theological topics, it is not without purpose to ask what is the orthodox doctrine on this matter?

THESIS

1. Predestination properly speaking is a certain operation of the divine intellect, by which we are divinely destined to attain Beatitude with certainty through supernatural means. However, the execution of this matter is accomplished not by the operation of the divine intellect alone, but also simultaneously with the adjoined operation of the divine will.

2. Although the effects of predestination extend widely, nevertheless they can all be reduced to three: namely to Vocation, Justification, and Glorification, as the Apostle indicated not obscurely in the Epistle to the Romans.

3. Moreover, by Vocation here we understand efficacious vocation, and by Justification that which has (as Theologians call it) final perseverance. Otherwise, neither Vocation nor Justification would be effects of predestination, but of a certain common providence in the supernatural order.

4. However, it is a difficult and great question, whether predestination according to any of its effects, and thus also according to efficacious Vocation, has a cause in the predestined person themselves? We deny this.

5. And yet nevertheless we will defend that it is in everyone's power, with GOD'S help (which is lacking to no human), to attain eternal life, even though no one will attain it unless predestined from eternity.

6. For it is in our power with God's help to cooperate with divine vocation and grace finally. Whoever does this will attain salvation by the benefit of divine predestination. Not because that cooperation is the cause of predestination, but because it is an effect of predestination certainly connected with its cause.

7. And there is a very great difference between these two propositions: GOD does not predestine except BECAUSE HE FOREKNOWS that one will cooperate with divine grace finally. And, GOD does not predestine except ONE WHOM HE FOREKNOWS will cooperate with divine grace finally. The former is false, the latter

true. For whom He foreknew, He predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son.

8. Thus although in the one who is predestined, there is no cause why he is predestined; yet in the one who is not predestined, there is a cause why he is not predestined; Namely because he does not cooperate. So that the divine saying is most true: Your destruction is your own; only in me is your help. And that of Blessed Augustine, in the book on the gift of perseverance, chapter 8: "Let him who is freed love grace, let him who is not freed acknowledge what is due."

9. From this it can be understood that those who are incited to sin by this thought: EITHER I AM PREDESTINED, OR I AM NOT PREDESTINED, etc., reason wrongly, and are not rather inflamed to a continual pursuit of piety.

10. For everyone is predestined who, cooperating with divine grace, will finally be free from mortal sin: and no one is not predestined, except because he will finally be found in mortal sin. Since therefore at every hour you are uncertain whether that will be the end of your life, you should abstain (which you can do with divine grace) from mortal sin at every hour; so that if you do this, you can always more probably consider yourself to be from the number of the predestined rather than from the number of the non-predestined.

11. But the fact that it is not entirely certain to you what you will be at the end of life, and you fear that you might end life in sin, this is very salutary for you: since indeed this uncertainty and fear ought rather to strongly incite you, so that what is uncertain to you, and depends on you with divine grace, you may make certain, by the outcome itself, by always living rightly. For it is most certain that you will never end life badly, if you have always lived rightly.

12. This is the reason and force of that precept of St. Peter: "Strive that through your good works you may make your calling and election certain." And of that of St. Paul: "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling." Finally, the Holy Spirit pronounces blessed the one who always lives fearful in this way.

13. But those Sectarians are very far from this blessedness, who have insisted that predestination is certain also because everyone can and ought to believe with certain faith, without any hesitation, that they are from the number of the predestined. For no one unless either having a particular revelation, or certainly being very frivolous as the Sectarians plainly are in this matter, can persuade himself of this without fear: since all things for the future are preserved uncertain. However, a not at all slight conjecture can be made about this matter. As Bernard rightly said, God has not left His elect in this life without a testimony of consolation.

14. Nor is predestination called certain because one who is predestined can never sin mortally, as some have foolishly maintained against the express testimonies of sacred

scripture, but because the effects of it are entirely certain: and the number of the predestined is also certain, although known to GOD alone.

15. As for what pertains to infants, furthermore we will defend that there is no iniquity in GOD, even if on account of original sin He reprobates those to whom the benefit of Christ the Redeemer is not applied by whatever circumstance.

16. Now reprobation properly speaking is also an operation of the divine intellect, by which GOD has decided to permit the sins of the reprobate, and on account of them to exclude them from the heavenly kingdom, and to punish them eternally. This happens in due time also by the operation of the divine will.

17. The effects of reprobation are only two: The Permission of sins (insofar as by a hidden and just judgment GOD neither wants to prevent them nor to efficaciously delete them) and the punishment of the reprobate: For Hardening and blinding are reduced to that permission. But the sins of the reprobate should not be considered effects, but causes of reprobation.

18. Since GOD from most special grace could either preserve from or expiate from sins all those whom He otherwise justly reprobates, and thus predestine them (just as He does predestine certain ones in that singular way); it must be referred to the will of GOD alone, and His hidden counsel as to a cause, Why He predestines some in this way rather than others whom He reprobates: nor can a reason for this be given on the part of the reprobate themselves. For St. Augustine rightly says: "Why He draws this one and does not draw that one, do not wish to judge if you do not wish to err."

19. Therefore not by making a comparison, but only absolutely, is there in the reprobate a cause why they are both not predestined and are reprobated. But in the predestined there is in no way a cause why they are predestined, but they owe the acceptance of this highest benefit to the mercy of GOD alone. And thus the fullness of divine foreknowledge (as St. Augustine says in the book on predestination and grace, chapter 13) is fulfilled with justice flowing to some, grace flowing to others.

I judge these theses worthy of being printed and publicly disputed:
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Source

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